DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 387 440 SP 036 095

AUTHOR Creamier-Wilhelm, Billie Lois; Karr-Kidwell, PJ
TITLE The Role of Common Culture and Cultural Diversity in the Creation of the Anti-Biased Classroom and Curriculum: A Case Study and Guidelines.
PUB DATE [95]
NOTE 61p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Acculturation; Case Studies; *Cultural Awareness; *Cultural Differences; *Curriculum Development; *Equal Education; Ethnic Groups; Higher Education; *Hispanic Americans; Intermediate Grades; Junior High Schools; Middle Schools; Multicultural Education; Public Schools; Student Adjustment
IDENTIFIERS *Diversity (Student); Texas

ABSTRACT

This paper first explores the problem of increased cultural diversity in public education and then offers suggestions and guidelines for educators in the creation of an anti-biased classroom and curriculum. Case studies of two Hispanic students illustrate the role of acculturation and the middle school classroom setting and curriculum on academic achievement and future educational and employment aspirations. A review of related literature looks at: acculturation models, ethnic identity, educating diverse cultural groups, non-biased educational environment, and diversity as an agent for change. Generalizations from the case studies suggested that: (1) the curriculum was not meeting the two students' educational needs; (2) Hispanic culture was not included across the curriculum; and (3) the middle school classrooms did not provide a secure environment for Hispanic cultural expression. Among 12 suggestions and guidelines for educators are the following: teachers must be sensitive to the diverse cultures of their students; curriculums should allow students of all cultures to share their culture with classmates; and the study of cultural diversity and common culture should be part of every curriculum and classroom. Appendices include letters and forms used in the study, the parent and student questionnaires, and academic data. (Contains 38 references.) (JB)

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THE ROLE OF COMMON CULTURE AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE CREATION OF THE ANTI-BIASED CLASSROOM AND CURRICULUM: A CASE STUDY AND GUIDELINES

BILLIE LOIS CREAMIER-WILHELM, MEd.
KRUM I.S.D. / TEACHER
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

PJ KARR-KIDWELL, Ph.D.
PROFESSOR, EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

The discovery or invasion of America began the process of acculturating the diverse ethnic and racial groups that were native or immigrants to its shore (Bennett, 1990). All American cultures -- Native (Bold Warrior, 1993), Anglo-European, Hispanic (Manaster, Chan, & Safady, 1992), African (Harris, 1992), or Asian (Rick & Forward, 1992; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1992) -- have been influenced by their forced relationship (Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986; Moyerman & Foreman, 1992).

Diane Ravitch (1983) has chronicled America's attempts to come to grips with the acculturation controversies arising from the diverse amalgam of these cultures which, across time, have created the American "common culture" she writes about today. The failures, tensions, dilemmas, and struggles of these ethnic groups against all odds to realize their share of the "American dream" and to legitimize their rights to cultural traditions and beliefs threads its way through American history (Banks, 1994a).

The first purpose of this paper was to explore the problem of increased cultural diversity in public education. There was an examination, through case study, of the role of acculturation and middle school classroom setting and educational curriculum on the academic achievement and future educational-employment aspirations of two Hispanic students. The second purpose was to draw from the study, suggestions and guidelines that educators may find useful in the creation of the anti-biased classroom and curriculum.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Acculturation Models

The first American public policies designed to deal with cultural diversity in the population were the policies of neglect or coercive assimilation (Valverde, 1993a). Native American, Hispanic-American, and African-American populations suffered the mandates of these policies. Native American children were taken from their parents and homes and placed in, at first missionary-run then government-run, boarding schools (Valverde, 1993a). In these schools, Native American children were forced to take traditional American names, speak English, and not

to practice Indian cultural customs. Mexican-American children were, at first, also educated by missionaries and then forced into segregated public schools where mandatory attendance laws were not enforced (Valverde, 1993a). African-Americans were, at first, forbidden by law education, then ignored, then placed into segregated public schools that were separate but by no means equal to white schools (Valverde, 1993a).

The struggle to end institutional discrimination and racism and to redefine society based on cultural demographics had its roots in the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s (Banks, 1994a). Leaders in the Civil Rights movement first wanted to create a law and society that was color-blind (Ravitch, 1983); consequently, each individual's equality could not be denied because of race, religion or national origin. However, minorities did not welcome this "melting pot" acculturation model of society in which minorities would loose past cultural beliefs and traditions and adopt those of the dominant culture (Phinney, Chavira, & Williamson, 1992). Instead, the "salad bowl" acculturation model of society in which minority cultures would blend with the dominant culture

to create the cultural amalgam, multiculturalism, was favored.

In the 1920s, visionaries like John Dewey and Horace Kallan were aware of this reality of American's pluralistic society (Valverde, 1993b). They were also aware of the conflict between an individual's right to cultural identity and the need to blend into the mainstream of society, if the individual was to be successful (Valverde, 1993b).

Ethnic Identity

Then as now, the blending of cultures is never easy. The institutional systems of this country, the educational system being one, are basically conservative and tend to protect the values system of the older generation (Stout, 1993). While, on the other hand, increased acculturation with the dominant society causes intergenerational conflict in immigrant groups (Rick & Foreward, 1992). American-born children of immigrants were forced to create their ethnic identity based on enculturation with past cultural traditions of family and community, but directed by social and economic values of the dominant culture (Berry et al., 1986; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1992). Students had a much greater chance of

becoming at-risk when school and home cultures were in conflict because student success was associated with the relationship between students and their families (Estrada, 1993).

Education should not ignore any student's struggle for ethnic identity, but it has. In its history, American educational experience has schools which completely ignored the cultural diversity of their students (Glazner, 1993). Curriculum, instruction, and teachers never reflected the diversity of the student population. Students were presented a model for the "melting pot" or assimilation goal of American education (Phinney et al., 1992) -- assimilation of ethnic minorities into the Anglo-European dominant culture (Glazner, 1993).

A case in point is the results of American educational institutions to educate and socialize the American Indian. Attempts to both acculturate and educate Native American students over the last century have been a dismal failure (Bold Warrior, 1992; Nel, 1994). In 1988, 10 % of Native American students did not attend school, 75 % were behind one or more grades; furthermore, Native American drop-outs, low achievement,

self-esteem, and suicide percentages were higher than any other minority group (Nel, 1994). Comparatively, 36 percent of Native American students were enrolled in special education programs while only 16 % of Black and Hispanic students were enrolled in special education.

The foundation of Native American student failure can be traced to the inability of the American educational system to provide those students with classrooms and curriculum which are sensitive to Native American cultural values and beliefs. Thus, native culture is in conflict with the dominant culture and Native American students are forced to adapt or fail (Nel, 1994).

Adapt or fail is a common occurrence concerning acculturation of all immigrant groups in America (Gay, 1993; Valverde, 1993a). The failure of immigrant or minority groups is not from lack of desire, motivation, aspirations, or academic potential, but how they go about learning is incompatible with traditional educational norms (Gay, 1993).

Educating Diverse Cultural Groups

American education, if it is doing its job, must reflect the multiculturalism of society but at the same

time emphasize the common culture that all Americans share (Banks, 1994a; Ravitch, 1991). All cultures are influenced and changed in continuous, first-hand, multicultural educational environments (Berry et al., 1986; Ravitch, 1991). On the eve of the twenty-first century, the greatest threat to the stability of American society is the emphasis on our cultural diversity rather than our common culture (Hett, 1991; Szulc, 1993). The democratic ideas and institutions that secure each person's right to his or her traditions and beliefs are the elements of the common culture each American student should be taught to respect (Banks, 1994b; Ravitch, 1991; Szulc, 1993). Multicultural education is designed to help unify a deeply divided nation rather than divide a highly cohesive one (Banks, 1993a).

Alex Molnar (1993), like Diane Ravitch, looks back at the history of a hundred years of America's cultural diversity. Molnar does not write as positively as Ravitch about the development of America's multicultural society. These chronicles deal with minority individuals, African American and Native American, who have experienced racism. This racism is drawn through

time, from one historical event to another, and documents the social conditions and attitudes in communities and schools which have led to the past and recent riots of Detroit and Los Angeles and the ethnic conflict in American's public schools. Like Ravitch, Molnar (1993) sees racial isolation as "social dynamite" and similarly concludes that if educators are doing their job, they teach children the contributions of minority group members, particularly to recognize the influence of minority groups on society, and that this influence should be appreciated, not feared. This contention leads to the concern of whose culture should be taught and how educators decide the scope of influence a particular culture should have on public school curriculum (Ravitch, 1991). Michael Harris (1992) asks how can American history be taught without discussion and examination of the Native American and Afrocentric input. A study of American youth further provides evidence that students of all cultures favor a setting that allows for the integration of their language, cultures, and beliefs into the mainstream society (Phinney et al., 1992).

Nathan Glazner (1993), who had been a past critic of bilingualism in American schools, expressed a current

change of thinking. This new thinking is important in the creation of the anti-biased classroom. Bilingual-Hispanic students should not be thought of as handicapped because Spanish is their first language. Their bilingualism should be thought of as a "treasured ability". Giving this value to a student's bilingual ability is not to say English is unnecessary for educational success: instead, knowledge of a second language no longer should be considered an educational disability to be overcome (Glazner, 1993).

Charles L. Gleen (1992) elaborates further regarding the controversy of bilingual education. The exclusive use of English or bilingual education in each child's language has polarized communities. Even proponents of bilingual education are debating bilingual education's purpose - to serve as a transition from cultural to host language or to maintain cultural language and beliefs (Gleen, 1992). Gleen's and Glazner's ideas merge. Glazner envisions the cultural language as a "treasured ability" and Glazner sees cultural language instruction both horizontally and vertically as means of overcoming American's neglect of foreign language instruction and a

way for immigrant children to use their cultural language effectively in future, adult situations (Glazner, 1993; Gleen, 1992).

Another misconception about multicultural or anti-biased education is that it is primarily directed toward empowering minority groups (Banks, 1993). Anti-biased education is not ethnic-specific, but a curriculum that will allow dominant and minority cultures the experiences needed to acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes to create a truly non-biased educational and, consequently, social environment (Bank, 1993; O'Neil, 1993).

Non-Biased Educational Environment

A non-biased educational environment begins with the attitudes and commitment of nation, state, and district (Banks, 1993; O'Neil, 1993). It is a myth that there still exists a national white Anglo-European culture in America (Gonzalez, 1993). Therefore, a critical mass of educational reform at the national level is needed to redesign the structure of education to adjust to demographics of cultural diversity (Gonzalez, 1993). As populations grow, the increase is planned for with increases in classrooms, teachers, and educational

resources (Estrada, 1993); so must the cultural diversity of the growing population be planned for by American educational leaders.

Cultural diversity at the state level can be planned for only if there are funds to do so (Kozol, 1992). In many states, funding of education is based on imaginary lines that separate schools, children, and the availability of resources (Gonzales, 1993). The reform of state educational finance is necessary to insure educational equity for all students (Gonzalez, 1993). In 1989, for example, 22 percent of American children lived in poverty (Stout, 1993). In 1990, 11 % of all families were headed by a single parent, and one half of these families lived below the poverty line (Stout, 1993). Sixty percent of Hispanic and Afro-American single-parent children lived in poverty.

In the state of Texas, for example, resource-rich districts spend as much as $19,000 dollars per student, yet resource-poor school districts spend as little as $2,000 dollars per student (Kozol, 1991). This disparity of funding is not unique to Texas but found all over the country. In Savage Inequalities, Jonathan Kozol ponders how a nation or state can allow the poor, usually ethnic

minorities, to be discriminated against because of these invisible boundaries between school districts. Since equitable school funding is in the hands of state legislatures and state court systems in Texas, California, Illinois, New Jersey, and Arkansas, to name only a few (Kozol, 1991), at the state level is there a possibility of changing a system of funding of schools in this country which is unfair, discriminatory, and unconstitutional (Kozol, 1991)?

Public school districts disproportionately allocate tax monies among the nation's schools. The Constitution states all men are created equal and must be treated as by law as equal. Brown vs. the Board of Education, a suit whose decision was based on interpretation of the 14th Amendment, reaffirmed this idea that society and education can not manipulate the Constitution. People can not be educated separate but equal (Kozol,1991). Thus, cultural diversity can not be addressed until states equalize educational funding for all districts and students.

It is the responsibility of each state to establish and regulate schools, but it is the local school

districts that implement education. The local district's mission statement, district and campus goals, and school board polices are the basic elements from which any change is created (Banks, 1993). The educational policy, mission, goals, and curriculum of the past will not meet the educational needs of students in our changing, diverse society (Gonzalez, 1993; Stout, 1993)). The non-biased curriculum that serves this new society begins with local districts building new supportive foundations whose building blocks are the acceptance of diversity, the willingness to support the value of diversity, and the courage to face issues such as racism, prejudice and stereotyping (O'Neil, 1993).

Effective schools must translate the needs of the community into teaching curriculum that is congruent with the cultural values and beliefs of all students (Gonzales, 1993). The policy, mission, and goals of the district should provide a curriculum that promotes unity, purpose, direction, and cohesion to the total educational experience of students (Gonzalez, 1993).

To appreciate and embrace the perspectives of diverse cultures in educational curriculum prepares students for success in a multicultural world (Ravitch,

1991; Vann & Kunjufu, 1993). Every student's confidence and self-esteem are encouraged when cultural heroes, heroines, and their accomplishments become part of the multicultural curriculum (Vann & Kunjufu, 1993).

Diversity as Agent for Change

Data from the 1990 Census states that public schools have a rapidly growing minority population. School populations are only going to become more diverse (Banks, 1994a; Russell & Johnson, 1993; Schensul & Carroll, 1990; Valverde, 1993) and this growing number will, just by the volume of its size, influence the decision-makers in this country (Banks, 1994). As previously noted, the concept of the dominant Anglo-European culture is fast-fading in sections of the country (Schensul & Carroll, 1990). The Hispanic population of the U. S. grew by 53 % while the non-Hispanic population grew by only 7 % (Estrada, 1993). The majority will be a majority of minorities. The new minority-majority made up the majority of the population of 51 major American cities according to the 1990 census data (Valverde, 1993b).

California and Texas and New York public school systems, for example, will all have minority-majority

populations by the end of the decade (Schensul & Carroll, 1990). Other educators must face the cultural changes in the social structure of the population (O'Neil, 1993; Ravitch, 1983, 1990, 1991). Coming to grips with and facing the cultural change will increase the possibility of improving racial and cultural understanding. If not, we face an unstable racial future (Szulc, 1993) and increased percentages of at-risk students and dropouts (Lewis, 1993).

For minority students, who in many cases are considered at-risk, educational instruction is based primarily on the basic skills level rather on higher-order thinking skills (Garcia, 1993). If any student is to be successful, instructional strategies that emphasize higher-order thinking skills are necessary (Garcia, 1993).

Students who study the norms and practices of cultural groups they are in daily contact with (O,Neil, 1993), coupled with higher-order thinking skills (Garcia, 1993), are more likely to achieve school cultures where racial harmony and understanding exist (O'Neil, 1993). Both conflict mediation (O'Neil, 1993) and cooperative learning groups (Garcia, 1993; O'Neil, 1993) are

techniques used to achieve anti-based school climates (O'Neil, 1993). Students meet as equals and are taught higher-order thinking skills such as negotiation, mediation, cooperation, and problem-solving skills that they can use to tackle the situations that arise in the academic and social school environments.

Eugene E. Garcia conducted such a case study whose subjects were Hispanic and Non-Hispanic seventh grade students. In one integrated group, thematic cooperative-learning strategies were used for one year, and in a control group of integrated students, traditional strategies were used. Conclusions were based on the study and a follow-up questionnaire four years later. Students who participated in the thematic groups, where cooperative learning was used, showed marked increases in reading comprehension, vocabulary, language-mechanics, and language-expression in English over the control group. The results imply that as language and cultural diversity become more common in classrooms, instructional strategies, like thematic instruction which implements cooperative learning, have a place in effective school curriculums.

Another positive result of effective school curriculums, that encourages diverse cultural appreciation and creates classrooms where all cultures can feel secure in cultural expression, is increased academic achievement. Guy Manaster, Jason Chan, and Randa Safady (1992) studied migrant Hispanic high school students and in their discussion, equated the level of student acculturation to the level of student academic achievement. They concluded that more acculturated Hispanic students were the more academically successful students. These students have a clearer sense of themselves and the world.

PROCEDURES

For the purpose of this paper, the authors assumed that any student's academic success and hopes for future occupational success were the result of a child's learning abilities, family support, and educational experiences, classroom and curriculum. It is also assumed that the job of education is to achieve a measurable amount of educational success and prepare students for occupational success regardless of learning ability and with or without family support. Furthermore, race, handicap, and socio-economics should not influence the educational experience in a negative way.

The first purpose of this case study was to explore the influence of a Hispanic student's degree of acculturation, classroom experiences, and educational curriculum on the student's academic achievement and student's occupational aspirations. The second purpose was to offer suggestions and guidelines for educators to ponder as they create non-biased curriculums and classrooms.

Since the case study involved human subjects, the appropriate application was submitted to the Texas Woman's University Human Subjects Review Committee in May, 1994. The committee's approval for research was granted by letter June, 1994 (See Appendix A).

Two Hispanic students from a rural school district, with a three-year student population average of about 850, were chosen for the case study. The data collected reflects the middle school educational experiences of the two students.

According to 1992-1993 Texas Education Agency (TEA) data, the middle school attended by the two subjects had a total population of 133 students. Subject one was an eighth grader and subject two was a seventh grader.

Nine or 6.8 % of the student population was Hispanic with no other cultural minority populations recorded. The attendance rate was 95 % for the campus and there were no drop-outs. Academically, Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) testing results show that in reading 71.4 percent of Hispanics taking the test passed, while in writing 33.3 % passed, and in math 14.3 % passed. In comparison, White percentages passing were 79.8 in reading, 64.4 in writing, and 67.6 in math.

The students chosen for the case study were selected using the following criteria: the students would be Hispanic, would be middle school students of the first author for two years, the first author would have had a very good relationship with the student and student's family, subjects would have been in the school district at least two years, and that the subject would have taken the TAAS in middle school for the 1992-1993 school year. Since only three Hispanic students took the TAAS writing test, and only two of the three had the required relationship with the first author, subject choice was achieved easily.

The first author approached each subject individually, and each agreed to participate in the case study with the permission of parents. A packet was prepared for each student with the participation letter (See Appendix B), parent questionnaire (See Appendix C), and student questionnaire (See Appendix F).

The first author delivered the packet and made an appointment with each subject one week from the date of delivery, when the subject returned the packet and the author proceeded with the student's interview at that time, given parent's signature on participation letter and completion of parent questionnaire. Both subjects not only returned the signed participation letter and parent questionnaire, but also indicated that the questionnaires were completed with their help. The results from the parent questionnaires were recorded (See Appendices D and E).

The first author interviewed each subject individually, out of the school environment at a local restaurant. The results of subject interviews were also reported (See Appendices G and H). Next, the first author collected academic data, namely TAAS scores and

class grades for the seventh and eighth grades (See Appendices I and J).

After evaluation of all data, the authors made the following generalizations for the case study. Three primary generalizations were drawn from the data. First, it was generalized that the curriculum was not meeting the educational needs of the case study subjects or the majority of Hispanic students in general. This was evidenced by TEA TAAS data (See Appendices I and J) which showed the percentages of academic success of students in the middle school was lower for Hispanics than Whites. Also, both subjects passed all subjects in the 1992-1993 school year, but subject one passed only one of the three areas on the TAAS test, while subject two failed all three test areas. Furthermore, subject two was repeating the seventh grade and seventh grade TAAS testing (See Appendix J).

Second, Hispanic culture was not included across the curriculum in the middle school. Neither subject mentioned any reference to Hispanics outside of history class, and references to Hispanics in history were brief, not in-depth, and unsatisfying to subjects (See Appendices G and H).

Third, the middle school classrooms did not provide a secure environment for Hispanic cultural expression. Both subjects mentioned that while teachers approached Hispanic references in a positive way, other students made remarks about Hispanics that the subjects felt were negative. Subject one was very proud to be Mexican, but felt that Mexican culture was best expressed with family and friends, rather than school. Subject two did not want to be seen as Mexican but as Hispanic; however, he stated that he spoke Mexican and not Spanish. Moreover, both subjects wanted to be able to study their culture at school. Subject one wanted the other students to experience her language and culture while subject two just wanted to learn more about his cultural past.

Another group of generalizations gleaned from the data the authors have compared with "themes" Eugene Garcia drew from his case study dealing with educational strategies for Hispanic seventh graders (Garcia, 1993). At the same time, the authors have also noted similarities with conclusions drawn in a study on migrant Hispanic students by Guy Manaster, Jason Chan, and Randa Safady (1992).

"Mexican-descent students exhibited a positive sense of self and expressed pride in their Mexican heritage - especially females" (Garcia, 1993 p. 278). Subject one expressed her desire to be known as Mexican rather than Hispanic (See Appendix G). She wanted to share her language and culture with other students (See Appendix G). Subject two seemed confused as to what to call his culture. He jumped from Hispanic to Mexican, but seemed uncomfortable with both (See Appendix H).

"All students regardless of ethnicity aspire to professional careers" (Garcia, 1993, p. 278). Subject one wanted to be a secretary but also wanted to be a lawyer (See Appendix G). Subject two wanted to be a professional football player or boxer (See Appendix H). In the Manaster, Chan, and Safady (1992) study, 78.6 % of the academically successful students and 50.8 % of the less academically successful migrant Hispanic students believed they would have a "high status" job in their future.

"Finishing high school or college is in everyone's future" (Garcia, 1993, p. 279). Both subjects expressed aspirations to finish high school and college (See Appendices G and H). In the Manaster, Chan, and Safady

(1992) study, 90 % of academically successful migrant students and 68 % of less academically successful migrant students expressed the aspiration and expectation to go to college.

"Mexican-descent students lacked specific instrumental knowledge about how to prepare for the careers that they wanted to pursue" (Garcia, 1993, p. 279). Both subjects knew that they would have to go to college after high school, but neither expressed any knowledge of particular schools or the types of colleges they needed to attend (See Appendices G and H).

"Mexican-descent students feel being bilingual will contribute to their future" (Garcia, 1993, p. 280). Subject one aspired to being a bilingual secretary (See Appendix G). Subject two wanted to learn to use both English and Spanish better, because he knew they were important to his future (See Appendix H).

Results of parent data from the Manaster, Chan, and Safady (1992) study and results from the authors' parent data had similarities. In the Manaster, Chan, and Safady study, parents of less academically successful migrant Hispanic students were more likely to have been born in Mexico. Parents' jobs tended to be lower status.

Fathers were generally employed and mothers were unemployed or homemakers. The authors' parent questionnaire results reflected the same data (Appendices D and E).

To fulfill the second purpose of this case study, the authors developed suggestions or guidelines, drawn from the generalizations inferred from the evaluation of data and review of literature, that would aid educators in the formation of effective non-biased classrooms and curriculums. Based on the generalizations and the review of literature, the authors have developed these specific suggestions or guidelines:

1. Teachers must be sensitive to the diverse cultures of the students that they teach.
2. Classrooms must be safe environments for children of all ethnic diversities.
3. Curriculums should allow students of all cultures to share their culture with their classmates.
4. Staffing of schools should reflect the cultural diversity of student population.
5. Educators should plan for increases in cultural diversity just like they plan for increases in student population.

6. A student's home culture should not be in conflict with school culture. This conflict not only causes intergenerational conflict, but also student academic success depends on family support.

7. Students should not feel that there is no place in school for their culture.

8. Educational funding must be equal for all students. Geography, race, handicap, poverty, or unconstitutional school finance laws can no longer deprive any student from education.

9. Educational reforms which address the changing, cultural demographics are needed to insure social stability.

10. America's economic future depends on education creating students who aspire to become successful workers or professionals.

11. A student's first language should not be lost as the student learns to survive in an English-speaking educational system, but preserved and refined as the student learns English.

12. The study of cultural diversity and common culture should be part of every curriculum and present in every classroom.

CONCLUSIONS

The authors ask educators to create curriculums and classrooms where all students are taught to think critically about the present and the future. They ask educators to motivate students to aspire for successful careers and to set goals to accomplish their dreams. But, in schools and communities students encounter problems that make facing the present or dreaming about the future a nightmare. Poverty, hunger, homelessness, unemployment, the national debt, war, crime, drugs, abuse, violence, racism and prejudice, and the destruction of the environment are the sheep that jump the fence as our students try to dream of the future. There seems to be no lullaby we, as educators, can sing that will send away the nightmares that trouble our students' dreams. The security and strength to cope with these monsters will have to come from a super-hero of gigantic proportions and supernatural strength. No, it is not another government subsidized program; it is not a new-age religion nor it is a new wave of educational reform; it is, as it has always been -- the American Dream.

The American Dream has lured emigrants to American shores who were in search of wealth and a better life. Poverty, jobs, homelessness, hunger, racism and

prejudice, violence, and the search for cheap land brought Asians, Europeans, Hispanics, Jews, Muslims, Catholics, Protestants, Gypsies, and a myriad of other diverse cultures to America.

Africans and Native Americans were, on the other hand, more victims than dreamers. Africans entered this country first as bondsmen and later as slaves. As slaves they helped build the economy of half a nation, a nation torn in half by the conflict that ended slavery and created freedmen who became the African-American patriots that gave birth to the Civil Rights movement that would change direction of a nation.

Native Americans have been the victims of genocide -- to both their culture and people. They have had to watch the theft of their homeland. Native Americans have been slow to forgive and to forget. Their integration into American society is littered with skeletons of failed government policy.

This history and diversity has found its way into the society and educational institutions of today. Diane Ravitch (1991), in her article "A Common Culture," states that today's classrooms are more racially and ethnically divided than ever before. The emigrant

population explosion coupled with descendants of so many different nationalities, religions, races and ethnic groups have created the minority-majority populations found in cities across the country. Educators are asking if the concept of the Anglo-European dominant society is still valid. And, if it is not, whose culture should we teach? Whose history, literature, and art? Whose ideas and perspectives?

A section of society would suggest that education must preserve the values and beliefs of the past. Another section of society would suggest that the goal of education should be to transmit, preserve, and strengthen the separate, ethnic identities of every student.

Christine Steeler (1993), in a discussion of this very conflict, stated that as our diversity grows, so grows the frustration of minority students and parents as they are continuously blocked by institutional racism and prejudice from access to the American Dream. This blocked access has manifested itself in the violence of South Central Los Angeles and the racial tensions present in American schools.

Kimberly Vann and Jawanza Kunjufu (1993), in their article addressing the education of diverse cultural

groups, stressed the importance of recognizing and legitimizing diverse cultures in school curriculum. Such a curriculum would create a balance of cultural viewpoints that has never existed before. When historical, literary, scientific, or contemporary issues are examined, the values and beliefs of all student populations would have equal consideration. The Eurocentric perspective will no longer properly allow students to answer the questions of today or prepare for a successful future.

All students need to be taught that black history did not begin with slavery, but with mighty African empires like Ghana and Ethiopia, and that African-Americans are the descedents of civilized, educated people as well as kings and queens. Similarly, Native Americans are depicted as existing only in the past as hostile primitives that had to be defeated and restricted to reservations to allow white Europeans to settle the land. Curriculums seldom contain lessons that teach a positive appreciation of the Native American culture as it was and is today.

Curriculum emphasizing cultural diversity will improve understanding and tolerance among students.

This can be accomplished when students are aware of the norms and practices of other races or culture. John O'Neil (1993) writes that administrators can avoid cultural conflict and will not have to "put out as many fires" if preventative, cultural sensitivity measures are taken. He illustrates this statement with a situation involving an African-American student and a Cambodian-American student who were developing a friendship. The African-American yelled a greeting at his new friend across a crowded playground. The Cambodian student felt humiliated and chastised by his friend's actions. The incidents could have been avoided if both had been aware of the cultural values and beliefs of the other.

Diane Ravitch (1979, 1991) has pondered the question of the possibility of treating people as individuals rather than trying to assimilate all peoples into one American culture. Creating a public policy of group distinction does not have to create group conflict because, though there may no longer be a single American dominant culture, there are commonalities that we all share. Can these commonalities bring the diverse cultures together in society and the classroom? The answer to this question is not simple; furthermore, the

nature of American's national identity is at stake in the answer.

Ravitch (1991) defines these commonalities or common culture as an American chorus created from the blended voices of our shared cultures. People from every other nation have brought their music, foods, sports, dress, values and customs, and dreams to American. The American common culture is a Thai deli whose menu lists: bratwurst, pizza, espresso, and tropical ice cream. She asks educators to teach appreciation of all cultures, and about the history and literature of America that teaches who we are, where we came from, why we came, and the democratic ideas that have held this polyglot of people together for more than 200 years. Teach historical ideals like those of Abraham Lincoln..."that this nation under God, shall have a new birth of freedom...and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish form the earth," or the ideals of Martin Luther King, Jr. who had a dream of a nation where people who would be judged by their character, and not by the color of their skin.

The common culture is not an insidious form of Eurocentric domination nor is it ethnocentrism. The

common culture is both the "pluribus and the unum". The common culture is a blend of the wisdom of our cultural diversity and the democratic ideals and institutions that protects each individual's rights to his or her ethnic identity. It is culture that can be defined as uniquely American.

Denis Doyle and Susan Pimente (1993) examined how a the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District, North Carolina, overcame disparities in academic indicators which reflected a sizable gap between minority and white achievement. Under the leadership of new superintendent John Murphy, the district implemented changes that would, within five years, create national-award winning schools and bring, in 1992, one thousand private school students back into the public school system.

How was this accomplished? Common concerns, common goals, and common action by a community dedicated to the improvement of academic performance for all its diverse student populations.

How can this common culture be emphasized in curriculum and classrooms? Educators must develop strategies which allow culturally diverse students to meet as equals and use problem-solving techniques to

solve scenarios about their daily lives and the common community in which they live. Reaching a consensus about a common goal gives students practice in problem-solving on a small scale that will hopefully lead to problem-solving on a large scale, like the community commitment of the Charlotte-Mecklenberg School District.

Cultural identity is sacred and it should be. It creates the brilliant, patterned blocks of fabric that are sewn together with the threads of American Constitution guarantees to become the great American common culture; it becomes a quilt that students can confidently cuddle up under and dream.

The authors' case study is only a small, fabric piece to be sewn into a diversely, patterned block that the authors wish to add to this comforting quilt. With an awakening desire to make a contribution, the authors challenge Themselves to examine their body of work, make honest assessment, and with earnest stitches create this contribution.

The limited scope of this case study allows the authors to examine only a small, predominantly white, middle school and two Hispanic students. However, the reflections found in the Garcia and Manaster, Chan, and

Safady articles are evidence that this small school and its Hispanic students have much in common with schools and students all over the country.

The first author has had a very special relationship with the school and student subjects. Thus, a third, personal purpose of this study surfaced for the first author with evaluation of the interviews and data. This "teacher of the year" author evaluated her own curriculum and classroom and made some soul-searching discoveries.

The first author was one of those teachers who fails to provide the secure environment needed for teaching respect for cultural diversity and equal academic achievement. The author thought her job a success as she observed the subjects' scores on TAAS writing improve from seventh to eighth grade. However, the author sat in shock as she listened to subjects, particularly as they related how they were very proud of their essay writing ability, but did not recall even one Hispanic author or poet that she had introduced.

Evaluation of their academic data increased her consternation. Subject two never passed TAAS writing, even though his scale score improved each of the three years he was in the author's class, a fact which she

believed was proof of improvement and thus his and her success. Moreover, the author relished subject one's success as the subject dramatically improved her scale score in writing from seventh to eighth grade and passed TAAS writing. What she failed to see was that subject one's math and reading scores were falling, and that although subject two's scale scores in reading improved, his math scores were also falling.

The authors learned from this case study that educators should teach a whole student, not just that part that needs refined language arts, math, or social studies skills. This whole student is the sum total of his or her academic abilities, previous educational experiences, parental support, and cultural identity. A curriculum and classroom that is built solely around whether students pass one section of a state-mandated test may provide successful outcomes, but is not necessarily the most effective learning environment.

In an effective learning environment, the total student is taught problem-solving skills that encompass every aspect of a student's educational and community life. If a student can learn the process of writing an essay, he or she can learn that math is also just a

series of processes. The student can learn that political processes can effectively solve the problems he or she faces or will face.

The authors can sum up the experience of the case study and their classes in two final suggestions for educators. There are lessons to be relearned. First, teachers don't just teach a subject, they also teach students. Teachers must address the needs of a whole child. This holistic emphasis becomes increasingly important as schools become more diversely populated, and at-risk student numbers climb. Second, there is much we can learn from the students and the parents of the students we are expected to educate. Parental involvement is more than a "buzz word" or a trend in current education. Our outreach and consistent endeavors to improve our interpersonal communications are vital to creating effective successful schools for the 1990"s and beyond.

While the first author stood in the driveway of one of the subject's homes, and as the parent invited her in, she realized the respect this Hispanic parent had for her because she was a teacher. But, the real successful

teacher in this student's life was not the author-teacher, but the parent. The parents of these students came to this country and climbed a mountain of obstacles -- language, poverty, and discrimination. From somewhere came the strength to go to work everyday, to raise children, to send them to school, and to believe that their children will finish high school, go to college, and have a professional career. Their strength came partially from religion, partially from the help of a government program, partially form school reform, but the major strength came from a Constitutional promise commonly shared by every American -- the right to the American Dream.

Now that the school year is over, and the class of 1995 is each reaching for his or her share of the "American Dream," we look at our two subjects and see where they have traveled in the few short months since their interviews. Subject one will be a senior next year, and she is so proud of herself because she will be the first in her family to achieve a high school diploma.

Subject two has dropped out of school and is working to support a pregnant wife. This subject genuinely

wanted to graduate from high school. He knows the economic and social handicaps he faces if he does not achieve, at least, a graduation equivalency such as the GED. Through his own desires and encouragement and guidance from family and the authors, we can together help him overcome the obstacles that lie in the path of a more successful future.

As educators and authors, we will strive for an educational system which is prepared to receive, in a few short years, his expected Hispanic child, and offer him or her the anti-biased curricula and classroom that will make this student more capable of the achieving a high school diploma.

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TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

DENTON · DALLAS · HOUSTON

HUMAN SUBJECTS
REVIEW COMMITTEE
P.O. BOX 22939
Denton, TX 76204-0939
Phone: 817/898-3377

May 3, 1995

Billie Wilhelm
P.O. Box 571
Krum, TX 76249

Dear Billie Wilhelm: Social Security #: 455-80-4068

Your study entitled "The Role of Common Culture and Cultural Diversity in the Creation of the Anti-Biased Classroom and Curriculum" was reviewed by a committee of the Human Subjects Review Committee and approved on 06/06/94. The approval is valid one year from this approval date and is about to expire. In order to keep your HSRC file current and to expedite the renewal process if necessary, please complete the following section and return this form along with any attachments if necessary to the Human Subjects Review Committee.

- ☐ *I have completed my study and have placed on file a copy of all agency approval letters and signed consent forms as applicable to this study.*
- ☑ *I have completed my study and am including with this form all agency approval letters and signed consent forms as applicable to this study.*
- ☐ *I have not completed this study and would like to request an updated approval for this project. I certify that there are no changes in the project and request that the extension be granted based on the information in the previous application.*
- ☐ *I have not completed this study and would like to request an updated approval for this project. There have been changes in the project since the previous approval was granted and these are noted on the attached page (please attach a copy of all the changes that have occurred in the project, especially in regard to human subjects, since the last approval.)*
- ☐ *This study has been discontinued. Any signatures from subjects that were obtained should still be submitted to the Office of Research & Grants. Check here if none were collected.* ☐

Billie Wilhelm
Investigator's Signature

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Patsi Hamilton
HSRC Chair - Denton

cc. Dr. P. J. Karr-Kidwell, Educational Leadership

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX B

Billie Wilhelm
(Phone # given)

Dear Participant:

Developing classroom environment and curriculum which is both culturally sensitive and supportive is an important goal of educators.

Your participation in this study will facilitate the formation of suggestions and guidelines for creating an educational environment that will encourage students to have a positive cultural self-image and appreciate the role of education in their futures. If you choose not to participate in this case study, your child will not be jeopardized in anyway. The welfare of your child is very important to me. I only want to use his or her experiences to study the situation of Hispanic students in public schools and hopefully make suggestions that will improve this situation.

No names will be used on data collected or results used in the study. The student interviews will not be taped. The researcher will protect the confidentiality of all information you have provided or academic records acquired by the researcher. The data collect will only be shared with the researcher's committee members. The data collected will be held by the researcher for three years. At this time, the data will be destroyed.

If parents do not read English, the questionnaire will be read and responses recorded by the researcher or the student. The parent will decide which will be more comfortable. The questionnaire should not take more than ten minutes for parents to answer. The student interview will require an appointment, at student's and parents' convenience, away form the school setting. The interview will take about an hour.

To insure communication between subjects and researcher, work phone number of researcher is listed above. Please call with any questions or concerns you have about the case study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the way this research has been conducted, contact the Texas Woman's University Office of Research and Grants Administration (817-898-3375).

With my signature I am agreeing to participate in a case study which will be used in a professional paper to be submitted as partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Master of Education in the graduate school of Texas Woman's University. I understand the purpose of this study and understand that all information will be kept completely anonymous.

Your signature allows researcher to use student's academic grades, plus state TEAMS, TAAS, and NAPT test scores achieved during student's seventh and eighth grades.

Please read the following statement carefully before signing this consent form.

An offer to answer all of my questions regarding the study has been made and I have been given a copy of the dated and signed consent form. If alternative procedures are more advantageous to me, they have been explained. A description of the possible attendant discomfort and risk reasonable to expect have been discussed with me. I understand that I may terminate my participation in the study at any time. I understand that no medical service or compensation will be provided to me by the University as a result of injury for participation in research.

_____ _____

Parent Date

_____ _____

Student Date

Thank you for considering to participate in this study.

APPENDIX C

ANTI-BIASED CLASSROOM AND CURRICULUM

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect anonymous data for a case study. The case study will involve two Hispanic students and their parents. The data collected will be used to make suggestions and create guidelines aimed at the formation of culturally supportive and sensitive classrooms and curriculum.

1. Place of birth:

   Father_____

   Mother_____

2. First language: Check one

   Father - English_____ Spanish_____

   Mother - English_____ Spanish_____

3. English Language skills:

   Spoken language skills - Check one

   Father - Fluent_____ Some English_____

   None_____

   Mother - Fluent_____ Some English_____

   None_____

   Do you READ or WRITE English? Circle one

   Father - READ yes no WRITE yes no

   Mother - READ yes no WRITE yes no

4. Circle highest educational level:

   Father

   Grades - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

   College degrees held_____

   Mother

   Grades - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

   College degrees held_____

5. Parent employment:

   Father_____

   Mother_____

6. How much education would you like your son or daughter to have?

   _____

   _____

7. What careers would you like your son or daughter to consider?

   _____

   _____

Thank you for your cooperation and participation in this study.

APPENDIX D

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

SUBJECT ONE

1. Place of birth:

   Father: Zaragoza, Coahulia, Mexico
   Mother: Ejido Tio Pio, Zaragoza, Mexico

2. First language:

   Father: Spanish
   Mother: Spanish

3. English language skills:

   Father: Some English - Reads English - Does not write English

   Mother: Some English - Reads English - Does not write English

4. Highest education:

   Father: Sixth grade

   Mother: Fourth grade

5. Employment:

   Father: City of Denton

   Mother: Homemaker

6. How much education would you like you son or daughter to have?

   As much as possible, college

7. What careers would you like your son or daughter to consider?

   Teacher, secretary (bilingual)

APPENDIX E

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

SUBJECT TWO

1. Place of birth:

   Father: Mexico

   Mother: Mexico

2. First language:

   Father: Spanish

   Mother: Spanish

3. English language skills:

   Father: Some English - Reads English - Does not write English

   Mother: Some English - Does not read English - Does not write English

4. Highest education:

   Father: Fourth grade

   Mother: Third grade

5. Employment:

   Father: Maintenance

   Mother: Homemaker

6. How much education would you like your son or daughter to have?

   Finish high school and go to college

7. What careers would you like your son or daughter to consider?

   Doctor or lawyer

APPENDIX F

ANTI-BIASED CLASSROOM AND CURRICULUM STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Creating classroom environments and curriculum that will encourage students to value education and appreciate the necessity to stay in school is very important to the future of all students. The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data which will be used to evaluate current classroom environments and curriculum. Another purpose for data will be to formulate suggestions or guidelines for the creation of culturally sensitive and supportive classrooms and curriculum.

These questions will be asked in an informal one-to-one interview.

1. Where were you born?
2. What is your age?
3. What language do you speak at home?
4. What occupation(s) are you considering?
5. Would you like to go to college?
6. Would you like to go to a trade school?
7. Do you feel that your educational experiences in the seventh and eighth grade will help you achieve your educational and career goals? Explain your answer.
8. In your seventh and eighth grade years do you recall any lessons in which Hispanics were discussed?
9. If so, tell me what the lesson(s) was/were about?
10. Did you feel this/these references to Hispanic were positive or negative? Explain your answer.
11. What Hispanic historical figures do you recall from lessons in the seventh and eighth grades?
12. Do you feel Hispanics were presented in a positive or negative way? Explain your answer.
13. Would you have liked to have had more lessons on Hispanic cultural heroes and the contributions of Hispanics in the various subjects you studied? Explain your answer.
14. Would you have liked to have been able to discuss or write classroom lessons in Spanish as well as English? Explain your answer.

Thank you for your cooperation and participation in this case study.

APPENDIX G

ANTI-BIASED CLASSROOM AND CURRICULUM STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

SUBJECT ONE

These questions were asked in an informal one-to-one interview.

1. Where were you born?

   Decatur, Texas

2. What is your age?

   Fifteen years old

3. What language do you speak at home?

   Mexican not Spanish

4. What occupation(s) are you considering?

   I would like to work in an office as a secretary - a bilingual secretary. I would also like to be a lawyer or maybe a legal secretary. I would like to be a Spanish teacher.

5. Would you like to go to college?

   Yes, a small university or junior college. I've always gone to small schools; I would not want to go to a large school.

6. Would you like to go to a trade school?

   Yes, a secretarial school.

7. Do you feel that your educational experiences in the seventh and eighth grade will help you achieve your educational and career goals? Explain your answer.

   My English class will help me most. I learned English grammar that I needed and how to write essays. I will use those skill always. A secretary needs those skills.

   I don't remember math or spelling at all, but I remember that I loved history.

8. In your seventh and eighth grade years do you recall any lessons in which Hispanics were discussed?

   Yes, Hispanics were discussed. I really don't see my self as Hispanic. I am Mexican. My family and friends are Mexican, and I speak Mexican not Spanish.

9. If so, tell me what the lesson(s) was/were about?

   In history class I remember lessons where Hispanics were discussed. I remember the mention of Mexican foods, religion, the part of Mexico in Texas and American history. I don't believe the lessons went into any depth.

10. Did you feel this/these references to Hispanic (Mexicans) were positive or negative? Explain your answer.

    The references were always positive. Nothing was said that was negative.

11. What Hispanic historical figures do you recall from lessons in the seventh and eighth grades?

    I remember Santa Anna and Poncho Villa. I remember some others but I can't think of any.

12. Do you feel Hispanics were presented in a positive or negative way? Explain your answer.

    The teacher was always positive. Other students were sometime negative. They'd say stuff.

13. Would you have liked to have had more lessons on Hispanic cultural heroes and the contributions of Hispanics in the various subjects you studied? Explain your answer.

    Sure, the lessons were too brief. I would have liked them to be more in-depth. I have always wished that there were more Mexicans at school. My friends are not here. They are in Decatur. If there were more Mexicans, I don't know, it would just be better. I learned about being a Mexican from my family.

14. Would you have liked to have been able to discuss or write classroom lessons in Spanish as well as English? Explain your answer.

Yes, I would have liked the other students to have experienced the lesson in Spanish (Mexican).

APPENDIX H

ANTI-BIASED CLASSROOM AND CURRICULUM STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

SUBJECT TWO

These questions were asked in an informal one-to-one interview.

1. Where were you born?

   Dallas, Texas

2. What is your age?

   Sixteen years old

3. What language do you speak at home?

   Spanish. I am taking Spanish now. I am having trouble with the class. The words seem different until the teacher reads them to me. I guess I speak Mexican.

   (I asked him here if he thought of himself as Hispanic or Mexican. He replied that he thought of himself as Hispanic.)

4. What occupation(s) are you considering?

   I haven't thought about it a lot. I really want to play professional football or be a boxer. I boxed last year, and I was pretty good. I didn't tell you because you might come watch me, and I'd mess up.

5. Would you like to go to college?

   Yes, I have to go to college to play football. I need to learn about how to play.

6. Would you like to go to a trade school?

   No way.

7. Do you feel that your educational experiences in the seventh and eighth grade will help you achieve your educational and career goals? Explain your answer.

   I learned how to box during my middle school years.

   Yes, English was good because it taught me two languages. Speaking two languages is good.

8. In your seventh and eighth grade years do you recall any lessons in which Hispanics were discussed?

   Yes, in history, I think we learned about Hispanics in the Civil War or something.

9. If so, tell me what the lesson(s) was/were about?

   I remember Poncho Villa.

10. Did you feel this/these references to Hispanic were positive or negative? Explain your answer.

    The lessons were positive. We just didn't talk about Hispanics much.

11. What Hispanic historical figures do you recall from lessons in the seventh and eighth grades?

    Like I said, I remember Poncho Villa. I don't remember none besides him.

12. Do you feel Hispanics were presented in a positive or negative way? Explain your answer.

    Negative, because not enough Hispanics were talked about and there were no Hispanic adults at school as teachers or anything.

13. Would you have liked to have had more lessons on Hispanic cultural heroes and the contributions of Hispanics in the various subjects you studied? Explain your answer.

    Yes, I would like to learn about my Hispanic backgroud.

14. Would you have liked to have been able to discuss or write classroom lessons in Spanish as well as English? Explain your answer.

If lesson could be in Spanish too, then I would not forget my Spanish (Mexican).

APPENDIX I

SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE EDUCATIONAL DATA

SUBJECT ONE

TAAS Data

Seventh Grade
1991-1992

	scale score	pass fail
Writing	1490	no
Reading	1580	yes
Math	1570	yes

Eighth Grade
1991-1992

	scale score	pass fail
Writing	1730	yes
Reading	1450	no
Math	1350	no

(scale score 1500 passing)

Academic Grades

	Seventh Grade 1991-1992	Eighth Grade 1992-1993
Reading	84	NA
Math	76	80
Language Arts	88	85
Social Studies	88	88
Science	85	88

(scale score 70 passing)

APPENDIX J

SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE EDUCATIONAL DATA

SUBJECT TWO

TAAS Data

Seventh Grade 1991-1992			Seventh Grade 1992-1993			Eighth Grade 1993-1994		
	scale score	pass fail		scale score	pass fail		scale score	pass fail
Writing	1290	no	Writing	1380	no	Writing	1460	no
Reading	1440	no	Reading	1390	no	Reading	NA	yes
Math	1510	yes	Math	1370	no	Math	NA	no

(scale score 1500 passing)

Academic Grades

	Seventh Grade 1991-1992	Seventh Grade 1992-1993	Eighth Grade 1993-1994
Reading	70	70	80
Math	60	73	68
Language Arts	72	81	74
Social Studies	70	82	68
Science	60	71	67

(scale score 70 passing)